

On the Compilation and Value of Qiaoxi Poems

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Qiaoxi Poems is an influential collection of poetry that reflects the integration of the Zhuang and Han ethnic groups in China. It has collected a considerable number of Zhuang and Han Chinese poems on an unprecedented scale, featuring poems that blend ancient Zhuang and Han characters, showing the historical memory of exchanges and integration between the Zhuang and Han people, and reflecting their common spiritual home. Qiaoxi poetry has spread to the United States, where it is collected in the Harvard-Yenching Library and the East Asia Library at Columbia University. This is a reflection of its widespread spread. Qiaoxi Poems are of great value to the study of the development of Chinese poetry in Guangxi during the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

Keywords: Qiaoxi Poems, poetry, inter-ethnic, artistic value

Introduction

In 1822, Zhang Pengzhan (张鹏展), a poet of the Zhuang nationality, compiled and published a poetry collection called Qiaoxi Poems (峽西诗钞). The collection was published during the Qing Dynasty in Shanglin County, Guangxi Province, China. But its influence is not confined to China, it can even be read in the United States at Harvard-Yenching Library or East Asian Library of Columbia University. It's extremely fascinating to see why Qiaoxi Poems has made such an impact. However, while there have been additional in-depth studies on the subject in academic circles, the national literary characteristics and overseas spread and influence of the Qiaoxi poems have not been discussed in detail. Therefore, this paper does some research on this topic.

Qiaoxi Poems is the second collection of poems compiled by Zhang Pengzhan, who previously compiled another collection called Shandong Poetry Collection II (山左诗续钞). The two collections made significant contributions to the spread of classical Chinese poetry literature and the canonization of Qing Dynasty literary works.

Among them, Qiaoxi Poems edited and collected 262 Guangxi poets, and recorded 1796 of their poems, which is the first large-scale collection of classical poems written by ancient Guangxi poets. It shows the distinctive national characteristics and peculiarities of the time in the compilation of the Qiaoxi Poems, the content of the compilation and its popularization and dissemination, and its essential influence in the history of modern Chinese literature. Mr. Liang Tingwang (梁庭望), a famous scholar of Zhuang literature, once mentioned, "In South China, Qiaoxi Poems had a great influence and promoted the publication of contemporary works on Zhuang literature such as the History of Zhuang Literature (壮族文学史)."

The Editors of Qiaoxi Poems and Their Editing Intentions

The compilation of the Qiaoxi Poems was completed thanks to the collaboration of the Han and Zhuang poets of the period. First of all, Zhang Pengzhan was a renowned Zhuang poet in the Qing Dynasty. Not only was he talented, but he also held prominent posts in the central government of the Qing Dynasty, which made him considerably respected in Zhuang society. Zhang Pengzhan was excellent at poetry and wrote his own collection of poems called *Gu-Yitang Ji* (穀诒堂全集). He also made friends with celebrities in the Poetry circle and compiled *Shandong Poetry Collection II*, which improved his poetic attainments. All these laid the foundation for Zhang Pengzhan's compilation of Qiaoxi Poems. Secondly, in addition to Zhang Pengzhan as chief editor, Qing Zupei, He Tongran, Zhuo Xian (粤西三甫), Xin Congyi, Li Baoyi and other poets also participated in the compilation. What is more, the literary collection campaign has been widely responded to by Zhuang and Han poets in Guangxi, who have jointly promoted the collection and compilation process of the Qiaoxi Poems in a spirit of inter-ethnic cooperation and mutual assistance, reflecting the spirit of mutual help between the Zhuang and Han ethnic groups.

Qiaoxi Poems constructed the memory and spiritual home of communication and blending between ethnic groups in southwest China. Qiaoxi Poems contains 262 poets and 1796 poems. Of these, 78 were composed by Zhuang poets and 511 were written by Zhuang poets, accounting for about one-third. This is an unprecedented number and scale of Zhuang poets and poems. According to the distribution of Zhuang and Han poets in each volume, the arrangement and distribution show the shape of "pomegranate seeds". This is similar to what a Chinese scholar *Shi Zhecun* (施蛰存) called "the meaning of aesthetic classification of poetry".

Qiaoxi Poems Construct a Paradigm of Ethnic Fusion Literature

Qiaoxi Poems selected numerous Chinese poems composed of ancient Zhuang characters, outlining the integration of Han and Zhuang characters. For example, Tong Yu-ling's poetry works 《独秀峰呈颖叔先生》 (Volume 11 of Qiaoxi Poems): "龙攫虎拏纷无数, 中间一岳尤峿峿。" This sentence is only fourteen words, but with the three ancient Zhuang characters, they are "岳" and "峿峿". The ancient Zhuang characters "岳" (bya) respectively is composed of the Chinese characters "巴" and "山", for the top and bottom structure. "岳" in Zhuang language means mountain or stone mountain. "峿", made up of Chinese characters "山" and "兕", the former refers to the real connotation of the word, the latter refers to the pronunciation. In Zhuang language, the expression "峿峿" means sharp peaks. Through the use of these ancient Zhuang characters in sentences of Chinese poetry, the poet shows the culture and customs of the southwest border region of China.

Qiaoxi Poems write the historical memory of friendship and mutual assistance, mutual learning and appreciation, and poetic exchanges between the Zhuang and Han peoples in their exchanges and integration. As a key example, Qiaoxi Poems focuses on the literary connection between Zhuang poets and Gaomi poets. Therefore, one of the outstanding aspects of this collection is the historical memory of the exchanges between Tong Yuling, Tang Changling, Yuan Siming and other Zhuang poets and the famous Gaomi poets Li Huaimin, Li Xianhao and Li Xianqiao (高密三李).

What is also vital is that Qiaoxi Poems describes the cultural landscape of the Zhuang region and preserve a large number of lovely records of China's frontier scenery and customs in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. It is a valuable cultural heritage of mankind.

The Literary Spread Space of Qiaoxi Poems Extends to North America

Since its publication for 200 years, Qiaoxi Poems have been collected and valued by numerous book collectors and scholars and have been widely disseminated. Qiaoxi Poems have not only been preserved in domestic collections and libraries, but also spread to overseas academic institutions such as the Harvard-Yenching Library and the East Asian Library of Columbia University. In April 1941, Qiu Kiming, director of Harvard-Yenching Library and a Chinese book collector, purchased and collected Qiaoxi Poems, and presented Qiaoxi Poems to Harvard-Yenching Library. In this version, the catalog page of Qiaoxi Poems has the eight-character regular print “积学斋徐乃昌藏书”, and the front page of volume one has the twelve Song style characters “哈佛大学汉和图书馆珍藏印”. It shows that this version of Qiaoxi Poems was collected by Chinese bibliologist Xu Naichang before it was collected by the Harvard-Yenching Library. Meanwhile, through the information “CHINESE-JAPANESE LIBRARY OF Harvard-Yenching INSTITUTE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY APR 5 1941”, which reprinted on Qiaoxi Poems, we learn exactly when Qiaoxi Poems spread to the United States. Nowadays, with the advancement of the digitalization of overseas Chinese ancient books, Qiaoxi Poems has been transformed into an open online public cultural product, which has further expanded the dissemination space and scope. Through the HathiTrust Digital Library, people can read Qiaoxi Poems online anytime and anywhere.

Conclusion

Thus, it can be seen that the Zhuang and Han poets are roughly the same in terms of the number of poems collected in the Qiaoxi Poems. In terms of poetry language, many poems integrating ancient Zhuang characters with Chinese characters are included. In terms of content, poems are used as a carrier to faithfully record the history of communication and integration between Zhuang people and Han people in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. It became an essential part of their shared spiritual home. Qiaoxi Poems not only have appreciation value and artistic value, but also have unique value for the study of Guangxi's political situation, social development and the process of Zhuang and Han national cultural exchange and integration in the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

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